



# Lacework or Mirror? Diary Poetics of Frances Burney, Dorothy Wordsworth and Mary Shelley

*Magdalena Ozarska*

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## **Lacework or Mirror? Diary Poetics of Frances Burney, Dorothy Wordsworth and Mary Shelley**

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Lacework or Mirror? Diary Poetics of Frances Burney, Dorothy Wordsworth and Mary Shelley sets out to determine whether each of the diaries by three female writers - namely, Frances Burney, Dorothy Wordsworth, and Mary Shelley - approximates the Philippe-Lejeunean concept of the diary as lacework or the more sweeping view, typical of the broadly conceived autobiography, which Georges Gusdorf famously likened to the mirror. The author explores Burney's, Wordsworth's and Shelley's attempts at concealing the gaps between their narrating and narrated 'I's, as well as examining their diary lacunae, especially helpful for illustrating the gradual emergence of the diarists' individual selves. Broader issues, connected with diary poetics, such as the use of metaphors and symbols, the degree of reliance on dialogue and ensuing narrativity, down to handling the past by means of anachronous eccentricities, are also subject to examination. The study is based on the assumption that the journal is a literary genre, which can be investigated with tools routinely used for the examination of literary texts. Yet, beyond the issues of literariness, in accordance with Philippe Lejeune's dictum, the three journals reveal the writers' diaristic practices. In fact, it seems that issues of the journal genre and the journal practice cannot be divorced, and neither can their lacework and mirror aspects.

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